



PSYCHOLOGY

Course Description

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The College Board

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,600 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,800 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT[®], the PSAT/NMSQT[®], and the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®]). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

For further information visit www.collegeboard.com.

The College Board and the Advanced Placement Program encourage teachers, AP Coordinators, and school administrators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their AP programs. The College Board is committed to the principle that all students deserve an opportunity to participate in rigorous and academically challenging courses and programs. All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum should be considered for admission to AP courses. The Board encourages the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP courses for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the AP Program. Schools should make every effort to ensure that their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population.

Contents

Welcome to the AP Program	1
AP Courses	1
AP Exams	1
AP Course Audit	1
AP Reading	2
AP Exam Grades	2
Credit and Placement for AP Grades	3
Setting Credit and Placement Policies for AP Grades	3
AP Psychology	4
The Course	4
Purpose	4
Prerequisites	4
For Students	4
For Teachers and Schools	4
Goals	5
Topics and Learning Objectives	5
I. History and Approaches	5
II. Research Methods	6
III. Biological Bases of Behavior	6
IV. Sensation and Perception	7
V. States of Consciousness	7
VI. Learning	8
VII. Cognition	9
VIII. Motivation and Emotion	9
IX. Developmental Psychology	10
X. Personality	10
XI. Testing and Individual Differences	11
XII. Abnormal Behavior	11
XIII. Treatment of Abnormal Behavior	12
XIV. Social Psychology	12
Content Outline	14
The Exam	17
Sample Multiple-Choice Questions	17
Answers to Multiple-Choice Questions	21
Sample Free-Response Questions	22
Teacher Support	23
AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.com)	23
AP Publications and Other Resources	23
Teacher's Guides	23
Course Descriptions	23
Released Exams	23

Welcome to the AP® Program

For over 50 years, the College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP) has partnered with colleges, universities, and high schools to provide students with the opportunity to take college-level course work and exams while still in high school. Offering more than 30 different subjects, each culminating in a rigorous exam, AP provides motivated and academically prepared students with the opportunity to earn college credit or placement and helps them stand out in the college admissions process. Taught by dedicated, passionate AP teachers who bring cutting-edge content knowledge and expert teaching skills to the classroom, AP courses help students develop the study skills, habits of mind, and critical thinking skills that they will need in college.

AP is accepted by more than 3,600 colleges and universities worldwide for college credit, advanced placement, or both on the basis of successful AP Exam grades. This includes over 90 percent of four-year institutions in the United States.

More information about the AP Program is available at the back of this Course Description and at AP Central®, the College Board's online home for AP teachers (apcentral.collegeboard.com). Students can find more information at the AP student site (www.collegeboard.com/apstudents).

AP Courses

More than 30 AP courses in a wide variety of subject areas are now available. A committee of college faculty and master AP teachers designs each AP course to cover the information, skills, and assignments found in the corresponding college course.

AP Exams

Each AP course has a corresponding exam that participating schools worldwide administer in May. Except for AP Studio Art, which is a portfolio assessment, each AP Exam contains a free-response section (essays, problem solving, oral responses, etc.) as well as multiple-choice questions.

Written by a committee of college and university faculty and experienced AP teachers, the AP Exam is the culmination of the AP course and provides students with the opportunity to earn credit and/or placement in college. Exams are scored by college professors and experienced AP teachers using scoring standards developed by the committee.

AP Course Audit

The intent of the AP Course Audit is to provide secondary and higher education constituents with the assurance that an "AP" designation on a student's transcript is credible, meaning the AP Program has authorized a course that has met or exceeded the curricular requirements and classroom resources that demonstrate the academic rigor of a comparable college course. To receive authorization from the College Board to label a course "AP," teachers must participate in the AP Course Audit. Courses authorized to use the "AP" designation are listed in the AP Course Ledger made available to colleges and universities each fall. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that its AP Course Ledger entry accurately reflects the AP courses offered within each academic year.

The AP Program unequivocally supports the principle that each individual school must develop its own curriculum for courses labeled “AP.” Rather than mandating any one curriculum for AP courses, the AP Course Audit instead provides each AP teacher with a set of expectations that college and secondary school faculty nationwide have established for college-level courses. AP teachers are encouraged to develop or maintain their own curriculum that either includes or exceeds each of these expectations; such courses will be authorized to use the “AP” designation. Credit for the success of AP courses belongs to the individual schools and teachers that create powerful, locally designed AP curricula.

Complete information about the AP Course Audit is available at www.collegeboard.com/apcourseaudit.

AP Reading

AP Exams—with the exception of AP Studio Art, which is a portfolio assessment—consist of dozens of multiple-choice questions scored by machine, and free-response questions scored at the annual AP Reading by thousands of college faculty and expert AP teachers. AP Readers use scoring standards developed by college and university faculty who teach the corresponding college course. The AP Reading offers educators both significant professional development and the opportunity to network with colleagues. For more information about the AP Reading, or to apply to serve as a Reader, visit apcentral.collegeboard.com/readers.

AP Exam Grades

The Readers’ scores on the free-response questions are combined with the results of the computer-scored multiple-choice questions; the weighted raw scores are summed to give a composite score. The composite score is then converted to a grade on AP’s 5-point scale:

AP GRADE	QUALIFICATION
5	Extremely well qualified
4	Well qualified
3	Qualified
2	Possibly qualified
1	No recommendation

AP Exam grades of 5 are equivalent to A grades in the corresponding college course. AP Exam grades of 4 are equivalent to grades of A–, B+, and B in college. AP Exam grades of 3 are equivalent to grades of B–, C+, and C in college.

Credit and Placement for AP Grades

Thousands of four-year colleges grant credit, placement, or both for qualifying AP Exam grades because these grades represent a level of achievement equivalent to that of students who have taken the corresponding college course. This college-level equivalency is ensured through several AP Program processes:

- College faculty are involved in course and exam development and other AP activities. Currently, college faculty:
 - Serve as chairs and members of the committees that develop the Course Descriptions and exams in each AP course.
 - Are responsible for standard setting and are involved in the evaluation of student responses at the AP Reading. The Chief Reader for each AP subject is a college faculty member.
 - Lead professional development seminars for new and experienced AP teachers.
 - Serve as the senior reviewers in the annual AP Course Audit, ensuring AP teachers' syllabi meet the curriculum guidelines of college-level courses.
- AP courses and exams are reviewed and updated regularly based on the results of curriculum surveys at up to 200 colleges and universities, collaborations among the College Board and key educational and disciplinary organizations, and the interactions of committee members with professional organizations in their discipline.
- Periodic college comparability studies are undertaken in which the performance of college students on AP Exams is compared with that of AP students to confirm that the AP grade scale of 1 to 5 is properly aligned with current college standards.

For more information about the role of colleges and universities in the AP Program, visit the Higher Ed Services section of the College Board Web site at professionals.collegeboard.com/higher-ed.

Setting Credit and Placement Policies for AP Grades

The College Board Web site for education professionals has a section specifically for colleges and universities that provides guidance in setting AP credit and placement policies. Additional resources, including links to AP research studies, released exam questions, and sample student responses at varying levels of achievement for each AP Exam are also available. Visit professionals.collegeboard.com/higher-ed/placement/ap.

The "AP Credit Policy Info" online search tool provides links to credit and placement policies at more than 1,000 colleges and universities. This tool helps students find the credit hours and/or advanced placement they may receive for qualifying exam grades within each AP subject at a specified institution. AP Credit Policy Info is available at www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy.

AP Psychology

The Advanced Placement Program offers a course and exam in psychology to qualified students who wish to complete studies in secondary school equivalent to an introductory college course in psychology. The exam presumes at least one semester of college-level preparation, as is described in this book.

The inclusion of material in the Course Description and in the exam is not intended as an endorsement by the College Board or ETS of the content, ideas, or values expressed in the material. The material has been selected by experienced high school and college and university instructors of psychology who serve as members of the AP Psychology Development Committee. In their judgment, the material printed here reflects the content of a typical introductory college course in psychology.

T H E C O U R S E

Purpose

The AP Psychology course is designed to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about the ethics and methods psychologists use in their science and practice.

Prerequisites

For Students

All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum should be considered for admission to AP courses. The College Board encourages the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP courses for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the AP Program. Schools should make every effort to ensure that their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population.

For Teachers and Schools

AP classes require extra time on the part of the teacher for preparation, individual consultation with students, and the reading of a much larger number of assignments than would normally be given to students in regular classes. The AP Psychology Development Committee strongly urges that any teacher offering such a class be assigned a reduced number of teaching preparations. To facilitate the teaching and learning of psychology, the committee also suggests that schools enrich the resource materials available to teachers and students in classrooms and libraries.

Because the AP Psychology course is designed to mirror an entry-level college course, and most college faculty use the most up-to-date textbooks and supplemental materials in their classes, the AP Psychology Exam is developed using current materials. It is highly recommended that AP Psychology teachers and students use current textbooks or supplement older texts with more recent material.

Although many schools are able to establish AP courses, some schools with fewer students offer tutorial work associated with a regular course or a program of independent study.

Examples of the content and organization of AP Psychology courses and equivalent college courses, as well as suggestions for appropriate resource materials, can be found in the *AP Psychology Teacher's Guide*. Go to AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.com) or see page 23 for ordering information.

Goals

An introductory college course in psychology is generally one semester, with some variation among colleges. An AP Psychology course need not follow any specific college curriculum. Rather, the aim of the course is to provide the student with a learning experience equivalent to that obtained in most college introductory psychology courses.

Topics and Learning Objectives

The following is a description of learning objectives for the major content areas covered in the AP Psychology Exam, as well as the approximate percentages of the multiple-choice section devoted to each area. This listing is not intended to be an exhaustive list of topics.

I. History and Approaches (2–4%)

Psychology has evolved markedly since its inception as a discipline in 1879. There have been significant changes in the theories that psychologists use to explain behavior and mental processes. In addition, the methodology of psychological research has expanded to include a diversity of approaches to data gathering.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Recognize how philosophical perspectives shaped the development of psychological thought.
- Describe and compare different theoretical approaches in explaining behavior:
 - structuralism, functionalism, and behaviorism in the early years;
 - Gestalt, psychoanalytic/psychodynamic, and humanism emerging later;
 - evolutionary, biological, and cognitive as more contemporary approaches.
- Recognize the strengths and limitations of applying theories to explain behavior.
- Distinguish the different domains of psychology:
 - biological, clinical, cognitive, counseling, developmental, educational, experimental, human factors, industrial–organizational, personality, psychometric, and social.
- Identify the major historical figures in psychology (e.g., Mary Whiton Calkins, Charles Darwin, Dorothea Dix, Sigmund Freud, G. Stanley Hall, William James, Ivan Pavlov, Jean Piaget, Carl Rogers, B. F. Skinner, Margaret Floy Washburn, John B. Watson, Wilhelm Wundt).

II. Research Methods (8–10%)

Psychology is an empirical discipline. Psychologists develop knowledge by doing research. Research provides guidance for psychologists who develop theories to explain behavior and who apply theories to solve problems in behavior.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Differentiate types of research (e.g., experiments, correlational studies, survey research, naturalistic observations, and case studies) with regard to purpose, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Describe how research design drives the reasonable conclusions that can be drawn (e.g., experiments are useful for determining cause and effect; the use of experimental controls reduces alternative explanations).
- Identify independent, dependent, confounding, and control variables in experimental designs.
- Distinguish between random assignment of participants to conditions in experiments and random selection of participants, primarily in correlational studies and surveys.
- Predict the validity of behavioral explanations based on the quality of research design (e.g., confounding variables limit confidence in research conclusions).
- Distinguish the purposes of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.
- Apply basic descriptive statistical concepts, including interpreting and constructing graphs and calculating simple descriptive statistics (e.g., measures of central tendency, standard deviation).
- Discuss the value of reliance on operational definitions and measurement in behavioral research.
- Identify how ethical issues inform and constrain research practices.
- Describe how ethical and legal guidelines (e.g., those provided by the American Psychological Association, federal regulations, local institutional review boards) protect research participants and promote sound ethical practice.

III. Biological Bases of Behavior (8–10%)

An effective introduction to the relationship between physiological processes and behavior—including the influence of neural function, the nervous system and the brain, and genetic contributions to behavior—is an important element in the AP course.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Identify basic processes and systems in the biological bases of behavior, including parts of the neuron and the process of transmission of a signal between neurons.
- Discuss the influence of drugs on neurotransmitters (e.g., reuptake mechanisms).
- Discuss the effect of the endocrine system on behavior.

- Describe the nervous system and its subdivisions and functions:
 - central and peripheral nervous systems;
 - major brain regions, lobes, and cortical areas;
 - brain lateralization and hemispheric specialization.
- Recount historic and contemporary research strategies and technologies that support research (e.g., case studies, split-brain research, imaging techniques).
- Discuss psychology’s abiding interest in how heredity, environment, and evolution work together to shape behavior.
- Predict how traits and behavior can be selected for their adaptive value.
- Identify key contributors (e.g., Paul Broca, Charles Darwin, Michael Gazzaniga, Roger Sperry, Carl Wernicke).

IV. Sensation and Perception (6–8%)

Everything that organisms know about the world is first encountered when stimuli in the environment activate sensory organs, initiating awareness of the external world. Perception involves the interpretation of the sensory inputs as a cognitive process.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Discuss basic principles of sensory transduction, including absolute threshold, difference threshold, signal detection, and sensory adaptation.
- Describe sensory processes (e.g., hearing, vision, touch, taste, smell, vestibular, kinesthesia, pain), including the specific nature of energy transduction, relevant anatomical structures, and specialized pathways in the brain for each of the senses.
- Explain common sensory disorders (e.g., visual and hearing impairments).
- Describe general principles of organizing and integrating sensation to promote stable awareness of the external world (e.g., Gestalt principles, depth perception).
- Discuss how experience and culture can influence perceptual processes (e.g., perceptual set, context effects).
- Explain the role of top-down processing in producing vulnerability to illusion.
- Discuss the role of attention in behavior.
- Challenge common beliefs in parapsychological phenomena.
- Identify the major historical figures in sensation and perception (e.g., Gustav Fechner, David Hubel, Ernst Weber, Torsten Wiesel).

V. States of Consciousness (2–4%)

Understanding consciousness and what it encompasses is critical to an appreciation of what is meant by a given state of consciousness. The study of variations in consciousness includes an examination of the sleep cycle, dreams, hypnosis, and the effects of psychoactive drugs.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Describe various states of consciousness and their impact on behavior.
- Discuss aspects of sleep and dreaming:
 - stages and characteristics of the sleep cycle;
 - theories of sleep and dreaming;
 - symptoms and treatments of sleep disorders.
- Describe historic and contemporary uses of hypnosis (e.g., pain control, psychotherapy).
- Explain hypnotic phenomena (e.g., suggestibility, dissociation).
- Identify the major psychoactive drug categories (e.g., depressants, stimulants) and classify specific drugs, including their psychological and physiological effects.
- Discuss drug dependence, addiction, tolerance, and withdrawal.
- Identify the major figures in consciousness research (e.g., William James, Sigmund Freud, Ernest Hilgard).

VI. Learning (7–9%)

This section of the course introduces students to differences between learned and unlearned behavior. The primary focus is exploration of different kinds of learning, including classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning. The biological bases of behavior illustrate predispositions for learning.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Distinguish general differences between principles of classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning (e.g., contingencies).
- Describe basic classical conditioning phenomena, such as acquisition, extinction, spontaneous recovery, generalization, discrimination, and higher-order learning.
- Predict the effects of operant conditioning (e.g., positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment, schedules of reinforcement).
- Predict how practice, schedules of reinforcement, and motivation will influence quality of learning.
- Interpret graphs that exhibit the results of learning experiments.
- Provide examples of how biological constraints create learning predispositions.
- Describe the essential characteristics of insight learning, latent learning, and social learning.
- Apply learning principles to explain emotional learning, taste aversion, superstitious behavior, and learned helplessness.
- Suggest how behavior modification, biofeedback, coping strategies, and self-control can be used to address behavioral problems.
- Identify key contributors in the psychology of learning (e.g., Albert Bandura, John Garcia, Ivan Pavlov, Robert Rescorla, B. F. Skinner, Edward Thorndike, Edward Tolman, John B. Watson).

VII. Cognition (8–10%)

In this unit students learn how humans convert sensory input into kinds of information. They examine how humans learn, remember, and retrieve information. This part of the course also addresses problem solving, language, and creativity.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Compare and contrast various cognitive processes:
 - effortful versus automatic processing;
 - deep versus shallow processing;
 - focused versus divided attention.
- Describe and differentiate psychological and physiological systems of memory (e.g., short-term memory, procedural memory).
- Outline the principles that underlie effective encoding, storage, and construction of memories.
- Describe strategies for memory improvement.
- Synthesize how biological, cognitive, and cultural factors converge to facilitate acquisition, development, and use of language.
- Identify problem-solving strategies as well as factors that influence their effectiveness.
- List the characteristics of creative thought and creative thinkers.
- Identify key contributors in cognitive psychology (e.g., Noam Chomsky, Hermann Ebbinghaus, Wolfgang Köhler, Elizabeth Loftus, George A. Miller).

VIII. Motivation and Emotion (6–8%)

In this part of the course, students explore biological and social factors that motivate behavior and biological and cultural factors that influence emotion.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Identify and apply basic motivational concepts to understand the behavior of humans and other animals (e.g., instincts, incentives, intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation).
- Discuss the biological underpinnings of motivation, including needs, drives, and homeostasis.
- Compare and contrast motivational theories (e.g., drive reduction theory, arousal theory, general adaptation theory), including the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- Describe classic research findings in specific motivation systems (e.g., eating, sex, social)
- Discuss theories of stress and the effects of stress on psychological and physical well-being.
- Compare and contrast major theories of emotion (e.g., James–Lange, Cannon–Bard, Schachter two-factor theory).

- Describe how cultural influences shape emotional expression, including variations in body language.
- Identify key contributors in the psychology of motivation and emotion (e.g., William James, Alfred Kinsey, Abraham Maslow, Stanley Schachter, Hans Selye).

IX. Developmental Psychology (7–9%)

Developmental psychology deals with the behavior of organisms from conception to death and examines the processes that contribute to behavioral change throughout the life span. The major areas of emphasis in the course are prenatal development, motor development, socialization, cognitive development, adolescence, and adulthood.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Discuss the interaction of nature and nurture (including cultural variations) in the determination of behavior.
- Explain the process of conception and gestation, including factors that influence successful fetal development (e.g., nutrition, illness, substance abuse).
- Discuss maturation of motor skills.
- Describe the influence of temperament and other social factors on attachment and appropriate socialization.
- Explain the maturation of cognitive abilities (e.g., Piaget’s stages, information processing).
- Compare and contrast models of moral development (e.g., Kohlberg, Gilligan).
- Discuss maturational challenges in adolescence, including related family conflicts.
- Characterize the development of decisions related to intimacy as people mature.
- Predict the physical and cognitive changes that emerge as people age, including steps that can be taken to maximize function.
- Describe how sex and gender influence socialization and other aspects of development.
- Identify key contributors in developmental psychology (e.g., Mary Ainsworth, Albert Bandura, Diana Baumrind, Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud, Carol Gilligan, Harry Harlow, Lawrence Kohlberg, Konrad Lorenz, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky).

X. Personality (5–7%)

In this section of the course, students explore major theories of how humans develop enduring patterns of behavior and personal characteristics that influence how others relate to them. The unit also addresses research methods used to assess personality.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Compare and contrast the major theories and approaches to explaining personality: psychoanalytic, humanist, cognitive, trait, social learning, and behavioral.
- Describe and compare research methods (e.g., case studies and surveys) that psychologists use to investigate personality.

- Identify frequently used assessment strategies (e.g., the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory [MMPI], the Thematic Apperception Test [TAT]), and evaluate relative test quality based on reliability and validity of the instruments.
- Speculate how cultural context can facilitate or constrain personality development, especially as it relates to self-concept (e.g., collectivistic versus individualistic cultures).
- Identify key contributors to personality theory (e.g., Alfred Adler, Albert Bandura, Paul Costa and Robert McCrae, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers).

XI. Testing and Individual Differences (5–7%)

An understanding of intelligence and assessment of individual differences is highlighted in this portion of the course. Students must understand issues related to test construction and fair use.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Define intelligence and list characteristics of how psychologists measure intelligence:
 - abstract versus verbal measures;
 - speed of processing.
- Discuss how culture influences the definition of intelligence.
- Compare and contrast historic and contemporary theories of intelligence (e.g., Charles Spearman, Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg).
- Explain how psychologists design tests, including standardization strategies and other techniques to establish reliability and validity.
- Interpret the meaning of scores in terms of the normal curve.
- Describe relevant labels related to intelligence testing (e.g., gifted, cognitively disabled).
- Debate the appropriate testing practices, particularly in relation to culture-fair test uses.
- Identify key contributors in intelligence research and testing (e.g., Alfred Binet, Francis Galton, Howard Gardner, Charles Spearman, Robert Sternberg, Louis Terman, David Wechsler).

XII. Abnormal Behavior (7–9%)

In this portion of the course, students examine the nature of common challenges to adaptive functioning. This section emphasizes formal conventions that guide psychologists' judgments about diagnosis and problem severity.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Describe contemporary and historical conceptions of what constitutes psychological disorders.

- Recognize the use of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) published by the American Psychiatric Association as the primary reference for making diagnostic judgments.
- Discuss the major diagnostic categories, including anxiety and somatoform disorders, mood disorders, schizophrenia, organic disturbance, personality disorders, and dissociative disorders, and their corresponding symptoms.
- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of various approaches to explaining psychological disorders: medical model, psychoanalytic, humanistic, cognitive, biological, and sociocultural.
- Identify the positive and negative consequences of diagnostic labels (e.g., the Rosenhan study).
- Discuss the intersection between psychology and the legal system (e.g., confidentiality, insanity defense).

XIII. Treatment of Abnormal Behavior (5–7%)

This section of the course provides students with an understanding of empirically based treatments of psychological disorders. The topic emphasizes descriptions of treatment modalities based on various orientations in psychology.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Describe the central characteristics of psychotherapeutic intervention.
- Describe major treatment orientations used in therapy (e.g., behavioral, cognitive, humanistic) and how those orientations influence therapeutic planning.
- Compare and contrast different treatment formats (e.g., individual, group).
- Summarize effectiveness of specific treatments used to address specific problems.
- Discuss how cultural and ethnic context influence choice and success of treatment (e.g., factors that lead to premature termination of treatment).
- Describe prevention strategies that build resilience and promote competence.
- Identify major figures in psychological treatment (e.g., Aaron Beck, Albert Ellis, Sigmund Freud, Mary Cover Jones, Carl Rogers, B. F. Skinner, Joseph Wolpe).

XIV. Social Psychology (8–10%)

This part of the course focuses on how individuals relate to one another in social situations. Social psychologists study social attitudes, social influence, and other social phenomena.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Apply attribution theory to explain motives (e.g., fundamental attribution error, self-serving bias).
- Describe the structure and function of different kinds of group behavior (e.g., deindividuation, group polarization).

- Explain how individuals respond to expectations of others, including groupthink, conformity, and obedience to authority.
- Discuss attitudes and how they change (e.g., central route to persuasion).
- Predict the impact of the presence of others on individual behavior (e.g., bystander effect, social facilitation).
- Describe processes that contribute to differential treatment of group members (e.g., in-group/out-group dynamics, ethnocentrism, prejudice).
- Articulate the impact of social and cultural categories (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity) on self-concept and relations with others.
- Anticipate the impact of behavior on a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Describe the variables that contribute to altruism, aggression, and attraction.
- Discuss attitude formation and change, including persuasion strategies and cognitive dissonance.
- Identify important figures in social psychology (e.g., Solomon Asch, Leon Festinger, Stanley Milgram, Philip Zimbardo).

Content Outline

These are the major content areas covered by the AP Psychology Exam, as well as the approximate percentages of the multiple-choice section that are devoted to each area. For a more thorough description of the exam's content, please see the preceding pages.

<i>Content Area</i>	<i>Percentage Goals for Exam (multiple-choice section)</i>
I. History and Approaches	2–4%
A. Logic, Philosophy, and History of Science	
B. Approaches	
1. Biological	
2. Behavioral	
3. Cognitive	
4. Humanistic	
5. Psychodynamic	
6. Sociocultural	
7. Evolutionary	
II. Research Methods	8–10%
A. Experimental, Correlational, and Clinical Research	
B. Statistics	
1. Descriptive	
2. Inferential	
C. Ethics in Research	
III. Biological Bases of Behavior	8–10%
A. Physiological Techniques (e.g., imaging, surgical)	
B. Neuroanatomy	
C. Functional Organization of Nervous System	
D. Neural Transmission	
E. Endocrine System	
F. Genetics	
G. Evolutionary Psychology	
IV. Sensation and Perception	6–8%
A. Thresholds and Signal Detection Theory	
B. Sensory Mechanisms	
C. Attention	
D. Perceptual Processes	
V. States of Consciousness	2–4%
A. Sleep and Dreaming	
B. Hypnosis	
C. Psychoactive Drug Effects	

<i>Content Area</i>	<i>Percentage Goals for Exam (multiple-choice section)</i>
VI. Learning	7–9%
A. Classical Conditioning	
B. Operant Conditioning	
C. Cognitive Processes	
D. Biological Factors	
E. Social Learning	
VII. Cognition	8–10%
A. Memory	
B. Language	
C. Thinking	
D. Problem Solving and Creativity	
VIII. Motivation and Emotion	6–8%
A. Biological Bases	
B. Theories of Motivation	
C. Hunger, Thirst, Sex, and Pain	
D. Social Motives	
E. Theories of Emotion	
F. Stress	
IX. Developmental Psychology	7–9%
A. Life-Span Approach	
B. Research Methods (e.g., longitudinal, cross-sectional)	
C. Heredity–Environment Issues	
D. Developmental Theories	
E. Dimensions of Development	
1. Physical	
2. Cognitive	
3. Social	
4. Moral	
F. Sex Roles and Gender Roles	
X. Personality	5–7%
A. Personality Theories and Approaches	
B. Assessment Techniques	
C. Growth and Adjustment	

<i>Content Area</i>	<i>Percentage Goals for Exam (multiple-choice section)</i>
XI. Testing and Individual Differences	5–7%
A. Standardization and Norms	
B. Reliability and Validity	
C. Types of Tests	
D. Ethics and Standards in Testing	
E. Intelligence	
XII. Abnormal Behavior	7–9%
A. Definitions of Abnormality	
B. Theories of Psychopathology	
C. Diagnosis of Psychopathology	
D. Types of Disorders	
1. Anxiety	
2. Somatoform	
3. Mood	
4. Schizophrenic	
5. Organic	
6. Personality	
7. Dissociative	
XIII. Treatment of Abnormal Behavior	5–7%
A. Treatment Approaches	
1. Psychodynamic	
2. Humanistic	
3. Behavioral	
4. Cognitive	
5. Biological	
B. Modes of Therapy (i.e., individual, group)	
C. Community and Preventive Approaches	
XIV. Social Psychology	8–10%
A. Group Dynamics	
B. Attribution Processes	
C. Interpersonal Perception	
D. Conformity, Compliance, Obedience	
E. Attitudes and Attitude Change	
F. Organizational Behavior	
G. Aggression/Antisocial Behavior	
H. Cultural Influences	

T H E E X A M

The AP Psychology Exam includes a 70-minute multiple-choice section that accounts for two-thirds of the exam grade and a 50-minute free-response section made up of two questions that accounts for one-third of the exam grade.

Students often ask whether they should guess on the multiple-choice section. Haphazard or random guessing is unlikely to improve scores because one-fourth of the number of questions answered incorrectly will be subtracted from the number of questions answered correctly. However, students who have some knowledge of a question and can eliminate one or more answer choices will usually find it advantageous to guess from among the remaining choices.

Free-response questions are an appropriate tool for evaluating a student's mastery of scientific research principles and ability to make connections among constructs from different psychological domains (e.g., development, personality, learning). Students may be asked to analyze a general problem in psychology (e.g., depression, adaptation) using concepts from different theoretical frameworks or subdomains in the field, or to design, analyze, or critique a research study.

Sample Multiple-Choice Questions

The following are examples of the kinds of multiple-choice questions found on the AP Psychology Exam. The distribution of topics and the levels of difficulty are illustrative of the composition of the exam. Answers to these questions can be found on page 21.

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. In psychological research, which of the following is most appropriate for identifying cause and effect?
 - (A) Participant observation
 - (B) Survey methodology
 - (C) Case study
 - (D) Experimentation
 - (E) Correlational techniques
2. The region of the brain most involved in the experience of emotions is the
 - (A) cerebellum
 - (B) basal ganglia
 - (C) limbic system
 - (D) reticular activating system
 - (E) parasympathetic nervous system

3. Which part of the cerebral cortex receives information about temperature, pressure, touch, and pain?
 - (A) Motor cortex
 - (B) Prefrontal cortex
 - (C) Temporal lobe
 - (D) Occipital lobe
 - (E) Parietal lobe

4. Visual negative afterimages are a result of
 - (A) opponent-processes
 - (B) simultaneous contrast
 - (C) spatial summation
 - (D) brightness oversensitivity
 - (E) color intensity

5. During REM sleep, which of the following is most likely to occur?
 - (A) Slowed respiration
 - (B) Sleepwalking
 - (C) Stable blood pressure
 - (D) Decreased heart rate
 - (E) Suppressed muscle tone

6. Which of the following illustrates a variable ratio schedule of reinforcement?
 - (A) Receiving five dollars weekly for completing household chores
 - (B) Receiving a grade of A on every paper submitted in a course
 - (C) Winning the lottery after playing many times
 - (D) Receiving a dollar for each mile completed in a charity walkathon
 - (E) Being given increased use of the family car after reaching age 18

7. The concept of functional fixedness refers to the fact that
 - (A) experts solve problems intuitively while beginners solve them by trial and error
 - (B) solutions to problems often occur suddenly after an incubation period
 - (C) individuals differ in their ability to visualize how objects will appear when rotated in space
 - (D) individuals often do not see unusual uses or applications for familiar objects
 - (E) learning under partial reinforcement is very resistant to extinction

8. This past year Donna was promoted from eighth to ninth grade and was assigned a new school locker with a new combination. Donna has found that she has trouble remembering her new combination because it is similar to her old one. The memory problem Donna is experiencing is most probably a result of
- (A) sensory memory decay
 - (B) proactive interference
 - (C) retroactive interference
 - (D) state-dependent memory
 - (E) encoding failure
9. Current research suggests that a sense of self-efficacy is most likely to be associated with
- (A) a high degree of social compliance
 - (B) a low threshold for emotional arousal
 - (C) a stable external attributional style
 - (D) an external locus of control
 - (E) an internal locus of control
10. According to Erik Erikson, the major developmental task during adolescence is to achieve a sense of
- (A) competence
 - (B) responsibility
 - (C) integrity
 - (D) identity
 - (E) intimacy
11. In which of the following Piagetian stages is propositional reasoning most likely to be used?
- (A) Secondary circular reactions
 - (B) Preoperational
 - (C) Formal operational
 - (D) Concrete operational
 - (E) Internalization of schemes
12. According to psychoanalytic theory, one of the important functions of the ego is to
- (A) facilitate gratification of desires at an appropriate time
 - (B) govern behavior prior to the development of the superego and the id
 - (C) achieve immediate gratification of desires
 - (D) satisfy the demands of the superego
 - (E) act as the conscience of the individual

13. Which of the following best illustrates a humanistic approach to personality?
- (A) Establishing gender schema in the development of sex roles
 - (B) Recognizing the importance of unconscious forces and biological instincts
 - (C) Using functional analyses to specify external variables that regulate behavior
 - (D) Emphasizing personal growth and achievement of individual potential
 - (E) Exploring the childhood roots of behavior
14. The reliability of a test is best indicated by which of the following?
- (A) The difficulty of the test for the intended population of test takers
 - (B) The spread of scores on the test
 - (C) The extent to which scores on the test correlate with a different measure of performance
 - (D) The degree to which scores on the test form a normal distribution
 - (E) The consistency of scores on repeated administrations of the test
15. Which of the following sets of numbers has the largest standard deviation?
- (A) -2, -1, 0, +1, +2
 - (B) 1.00, 1.25, 1.50, 1.75, 2.00, 2.25, 2.50, 2.75, 3.00
 - (C) 2, 6, 10, 14, 18
 - (D) 5.756, 5.765, 5.890, 5.895, 5.923
 - (E) 91, 92, 93, 94, 95
16. An individual who experiences major distortions of reality is most likely suffering from which of the following types of disorders?
- (A) Anxiety
 - (B) Mood
 - (C) Adjustment
 - (D) Schizophrenic
 - (E) Bipolar
17. A person with agoraphobia is best described as an individual who
- (A) displays suicidal behavior in stressful situations
 - (B) shows little regard for social norms
 - (C) suffers from an irrational fear and avoidance of public places
 - (D) suffers from chronic fatigue and paranoia in social situations
 - (E) shows excessive mood swings without warning

18. Jared wants to use the foot-in-the-door technique to try to convince his parents to buy him a car. Which of the following would most clearly demonstrate his correct application of the technique?
- (A) He asks his parents for a very expensive truck, and when they refuse, he asks for an economy car.
 - (B) He tells his parents that he will sacrifice half his allowance for a year if they buy him a car.
 - (C) He asks his parents to buy him a bicycle, and when they agree to do that, he asks them to buy him a car instead.
 - (D) He tells his parents that if they buy him a car, he will wash their car every week and drive his little sister to school.
 - (E) Before asking his parents to buy him a car, he comments on what a fantastic job they have done in raising him.
19. With which of the following would a cognitively oriented therapist most likely be concerned?
- (A) The number of negative self-statements made by the patient
 - (B) The temperament of the patient as a child
 - (C) The number of individuals in the patient's household
 - (D) The physiological makeup of the patient
 - (E) The responses made by the patient on a projective test
20. Social learning experiments on the modeling of aggressive behavior have demonstrated that
- (A) children are not affected by watching violence on television
 - (B) abusive parenting accounts for most children's aggressive acts
 - (C) children can develop aggressive behavior simply by watching others perform aggressive acts
 - (D) children's aggressive behavior must be reinforced for it to be repeated
 - (E) children imitate aggressive behavior seen on television only if the media violence is performed by children

Answers to Multiple-Choice Questions

1 – D	6 – C	11 – C	16 – D
2 – C	7 – D	12 – A	17 – C
3 – E	8 – B	13 – D	18 – C
4 – A	9 – E	14 – E	19 – A
5 – E	10 – D	15 – C	20 – C

Sample Free-Response Questions

In the free-response section of the AP Psychology Exam, students are asked to answer two essay questions. The questions may require students to interrelate different content areas and to analyze and evaluate psychological constructs and, more generally, theoretical perspectives. Students are expected to use their analytical and organizational skills to formulate cogent answers in writing their essays. Following are two sample questions.

Directions: You have 50 minutes to answer both of the following questions. It is not enough to answer a question by merely listing facts. You should present a cogent argument based upon your critical analysis of the question posed, using appropriate psychological terminology.

1. Control is often called the hallmark of a good experiment. Describe randomization, group matching, counterbalancing, placebo, and double-blind as control techniques. Briefly develop an example of the way each could be or has been used in an experiment.

2. Briefly describe each of the disorders listed below. For each disorder, include a general description of the disorder, a review of the symptomatology, the mode of treatment currently viewed as most effective, and the rationale for use of this treatment.
 - (a) Anxiety disorder
 - (b) Bipolar disorder
 - (c) Schizophrenia

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- AP Course Descriptions, AP Exam questions and scoring guidelines, sample syllabi, and feature articles.
- A searchable Institutes and Workshops database, providing information about professional development events.
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AP Publications and Other Resources

Free AP resources are available to help students, parents, AP Coordinators, and high school and college faculty learn more about the AP Program and its courses and exams. Visit www.collegeboard.com/apfreepubs.

Teacher's Guides and Course Descriptions may be downloaded free of charge from AP Central; printed copies may be purchased through the College Board Store (store.collegeboard.com). Released Exams and other priced AP resources are available at the College Board Store.

Teacher's Guides

For those about to teach an AP course for the first time, or for experienced AP teachers who would like to get some fresh ideas for the classroom, the Teacher's Guide is an excellent resource. Each Teacher's Guide contains syllabi developed by high school teachers currently teaching the AP course and college faculty who teach the equivalent course at colleges and universities. Along with detailed course outlines and innovative teaching tips, you'll also find extensive lists of suggested teaching resources.

Course Descriptions

Course Descriptions are available for each AP subject. They provide an outline of each AP course's content, explain the kinds of skills students are expected to demonstrate in the corresponding introductory college-level course, and describe the AP Exam. Sample multiple-choice questions with an answer key and sample free-response questions are included. (The Course Description for AP Computer Science is available in PDF format only.)

Released Exams

Periodically the AP Program releases a complete copy of each exam. In addition to providing the multiple-choice questions and answers, the publication describes the process of scoring the free-response questions and includes examples of students' actual responses, the scoring standards, and commentary that explains why the responses received the scores they did.

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